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[The President]

address to the Crown should *not* refer to a Bill pending in either House. The reason for this limitation is not far to seek; if a Bill is passed by Parliament and assented to by the Crown, it is perfectly open to a hostile majority, should it come into power, to repeal or alter such a Bill at a later date. If, as the hon. Member Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti appears to think, there is a majority in the present Council against the Hindu Religious Endowments Bill, the way is open to that majority to assert itself and have it repealed at a later stage even if it is in the meantime assented to by the Governor and agreed to by the Governor-General. But I am of the decided opinion that the Council should not *just now* intervene in the matter. I therefore rule that the motions of the hon. Member Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti as out of order."

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR ON THE MADRAS
HINDU RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS BILL.

11-30 a.m. The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I have to convey to the Council a message from His Excellency the Governor—

"His Excellency the Governor has under section 81-A of the Government of India Act decided to return the Hindu Religious Endowments Bill to the Council for re-consideration with reference to parts of the Bill which will be duly notified to hon. Members.—WILLINGDON'."

[Opposition—Cheers]

9-12-23

MOTIONS ON MATTERS OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST.

MINIMUM PAY OF VILLAGE OFFICERS.

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR:—"Sir, I beg to move—

that this Council recommends to the Government that the minimum pay of village officers be fixed at Rs. 20.

"It may perhaps be surprising that I, who have been urging for retrenchment in the various public services, should make this motion for the increase of pay of the village officers. But I am one of those who think that, while we should always try to keep the Government expenditure at a proper limit, still there should be complete satisfaction on the part of the village officers of the Government and that the difference in pay between the higher classes and lower classes of the Government should be reduced as much as possible. I have always complained, both in this House and outside it, that the pay of an officer in an office is much larger than the pay of all the establishment under his charge put together. Take for instance the district and sessions judge. His pay will be about Rs. 3,000 and the next man, viz., the sarishtadar, will be getting only Rs. 200 and all the other servants in that office put together will be drawing about Rs. 700 or 800, so that the whole establishment will be getting very much less than what the one individual, the head of the office, will be getting. This, I submit, is a thing which should be put an end to. If we want that the discontent among the lower services should be reduced and if possible removed, we must try to reduce the difference in the salaries of the higher and the lower officers. This can be done only in two ways: by levelling down or by levelling up. It may even be done by both. I would divide this subject into two aspects, namely, the desirability and necessity of enhancing the salaries of the village officers and the financial aspect. So far as the pay of the village officers is concerned, it is very low compared with

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the pay of even the peons and other servants of that class. We know that in several offices the peons are paid about Rs. 17 or 18. The police constables are paid on the average about Rs. 20. There can be no two opinions on the question of the importance of the work the village officers are expected to do. The position and the functions of these village officers are far more important than those of any other officer including even the district officer. It is possible—I do not mean to say that it is likely—that if officers belonging to other departments non-co-operate with or boycott the Government, the Government can very well go on. But if the village officers boycott the Government, the Government will have to come to a stand-still. If, therefore, there is any faithful, useful and indispensable branch of service which should be recognized by the Government as such, it is this village establishment. There was a fear in the days of non-co-operation that some of these people in the north would non-co-operate with the Government and hence a hasty Act was enacted imagining all possible difficulties. But the village officers proved loyal to the end and I don't think that there was any necessity to use the Act in the case of even one village officer. That shows that not only these servants are loyal and that their service is very useful and indispensable, but that it is necessary that they should be made content so that the Government may carry on its functions satisfactorily. I do not think it is necessary for me to go at length into the question of giving these officers reasonably higher pay. But if any hon. Members on the other side of the House question the desirability of doing so, I may probably say a few words in reply. I may say this now, that if we only consider the history of this question for the last two or three years, lip sympathy or even heart sympathy will be coming in abundance from hon. Members belonging to the Government. Only they plead want of money. It is, therefore, necessary that we go into the question of the finances. We know that, so far as some of the Government establishments are concerned, the salaries have gone up by leaps and bounds. From the information that was supplied to us two years ago by the hon. the Leader of the House, we know that within 20 years—from 1901 to 1921—the salaries of all the officers excepting the village officers and menials and servants have gone up from $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees to about 5 crores of rupees. If we include the salaries of the servants of the various departments, the increase may come to 6 crores of rupees. But though there was an increase in the pay of the village headmen and the karnams about three years ago, there was practically not much increase in the total salary paid to them. Owing to the incessant pressure of public opinion both inside and outside this House, the Government were compelled to increase the pay of these village officers to a certain extent. But what has been given by the right hand has been to a large extent taken away by the left hand. After a slight increase had been made in their pay, a large reduction has been made in the number of the village officers and menials. Thus even though there has been an increase in their pay, it is curious enough to find that within the last two years there has been a considerable reduction in the charges on account of these establishments. In the case of the village vettis there has been a reduction of 6 lakhs of rupees in their pay during the last two years and in the case of talaiyaris, who come under the Police head, there has been a decrease of 6 lakhs of rupees in their pay. In the case of karnams and assistant karnams there has been a decrease of $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees. Thus, Sir, if we take the village establishments alone, there has been a reduction in the establishment charges of nearly 14 or 15 lakhs of rupees. This fact should well be noted. I am

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one of those who think that the villages should not be grouped and the grouping of the villages for purposes of economy has caused considerable injustice and injury in the various villages. But still there is the fact that while the Government pretend to increase the salaries by a few rupees, there has been a reduction of about 14 lakhs of rupees in the total cost of the establishment. Therefore, Sir, if there had been no reduction in the total cost, if the salaries of the village officers had been really increased, the cost of establishment of these village officers would to-day have been 14 lakhs of rupees more than what it is. Exaggerated notions may exist as to the probable cost which would involve in giving effect to my resolution. My resolution says that the minimum pay of village officers be fixed at Rs. 20. Generally speaking, there are some village officers even to-day who do not get even Rs. 15 a month. But taking the average pay of the village officers including the assistant karnams to be Rs. 15 a month, if their pay is raised to Rs. 20, the total additional cost will come to about Rs. 14 or 15 lakhs and not 30 or 40 lakhs. I think that an expenditure of 14 or 15 lakhs of rupees is an absolute necessity to satisfy the thirty thousand village officers.

11-45 a.m. “No doubt the question will arise as to how we are to get Rs. 14 or 15 lakhs and probably some of the gentlemen who are going to reply on behalf of Government may say ‘we fully sympathise with these people, we know that they want something, and yet there is no money available.’ Well, all I can say is that in the last few years, or rather for the last twenty years, the expenditure over establishments has gone up by leaps and bounds, so much so that it has gone up by over 300 per cent; and when the Government have been able to devise some means or other for meeting this increased expenditure on establishments, and when they have increased the pay of officers who are getting such fat salaries as Rs. 2,000 or Rs. 3,000—when they have been able to find means for all this expenditure, they must, by any means whatever, certainly keep the 30,000 people contented and above wants. It is not for us to say as to how the Government should find funds. We have been told over and over again in recent times that any expenditure would be absolutely impossible in the present state of financial stringency. However, for all the expenditure that the Government had to make, they were able to find money from some source or other, in some cases by making retrenchment and in other cases by various other means. So far as we are concerned, it is not for us to say as to how the Government should find funds. All that we say is that these poor people, who have to supply all the sinews of war in times of emergencies, and have to keep accounts, should be kept above wants, so that at any time they may not be induced by fair or foul means to go against the Government or to give up their appointments the latter of which, if they do, will lead to useless and dishonest people getting into their places. On the whole it cannot be denied that the village officers as a class have been satisfactory, have been honest, have been faithful and loyal in the discharge of their duties, and if any class of people deserves encouragement, it is the village officers.

“Many of us I suppose have met these village officers in the election campaign. We must have noticed what their influence is and what their responsibilities are in their respective villages. In spite of their responsibilities and in spite of their influence, these officers think they are very badly paid, so much so this feeling might at any time be translated into action against the Government. Therefore we should take some precaution as it were and keep these people contented. It may be said that it is difficult to find the whole

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sum in this particular year even if Government express the desirability of giving an increase in their pay. Let us hope that His Excellency the Viceroy will not leave this town without giving us some hope of reducing our annual contribution of $2\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees to the Government of India. It seems to me clear that there will be some appreciable reduction in our payment, and let us hope that a small portion of this might go to satisfy these village officers.

"I am one of those who think that the menials, the village officers, village teachers and the non-gazetted officers are very badly paid and I say that their salaries should be increased at an early date. This has been my conviction all along and this is only one step in the course of the realization of that object. In any case, so far as the village officers are concerned, there can be no doubt that this House will give its emphatic opinion that it is desirable that the pay of these officers should be increased to Rs. 20 at present."

MR. R. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR :—"Mr. President, it may perhaps be somewhat unfortunate that the first resolution in this session is calculated to put the Government to an expenditure of 17 lakhs of rupees. I am fully conscious of that, but if I venture to give my support to this resolution, it is upon a weighty consideration of the situation which I shall presently submit for the consideration of this House. That situation the Government must be prepared to meet sooner or later, better sooner than later. I have not the slightest doubt, and I am perfectly certain, that the cause of the village officers will receive, at the hands of this House, and ultimately of the Government, a fair, generous and sympathetic consideration.

"Hon. Members of this House will be perfectly aware of the fact that about two years ago a resolution was tabled by my hon. Friend Mr. Narasimhacharlu to increase their pay to Rs. 12. Then another hon. Member from Bellary came forward with an amendment to substitute Rs. 15 for Rs. 12. That resolution, notwithstanding the vehement opposition that proceeded from the Treasury Bench, was carried by an overwhelming majority. The Government then found it difficult to give effect to this resolution. After deliberate consideration they came out with a Government Order in August 1922 with a view to give effect to the opinions of this House and passed orders increasing their pay to Rs. 15.

"We find that the number of these village officers comes to about 30,000 and the expenditure of the State on account of this establishment comes to nearly Rs. 50 lakhs. If this resolution is carried, the effect will be an expenditure of 66 or 67 lakhs of rupees, or in other words one-third as much again will have to come out of the public exchequer for the purpose of meeting the enhanced pay which is claimed for them. I am fully conscious of the fact that we are having a deficit budget. I am equally conscious of the fact that our finances are by no means cheerful or encouraging, but in view of the large and important part played by the village officers in the general structure of the administration—for they form the very foundation on which the Government rests—and in view of the onerous and important duties that they are called upon to perform, it is absolutely necessary that the discontent which now prevails among them should be removed by the Government coming to their rescue. Hon. Members of this House are perfectly aware that the monigars are the real representatives of Government in villages and if they only look to chapter V of the Village Officers' Manual they will find as many as 44 or 45 important duties assigned to them, and after all they are getting only Rs. 15 per month. They are also aware that peons in

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one of those who think that the villages should not be grouped and the grouping of the villages for purposes of economy has caused considerable injustice and injury in the various villages. But still there is the fact that while the Government pretend to increase the salaries by a few rupees, there has been a reduction of about 14 lakhs of rupees in the total cost of the establishment. Therefore, Sir, if there had been no reduction in the total cost, if the salaries of the village officers had been really increased, the cost of establishment of these village officers would to-day have been 14 lakhs of rupees more than what it is. Exaggerated notions may exist as to the probable cost which would involve in giving effect to my resolution. My resolution says that the minimum pay of village officers be fixed at Rs. 20. Generally speaking, there are some village officers even to-day who do not get even Rs. 15 a month. But taking the average pay of the village officers including the assistant karnams to be Rs. 15 a month, if their pay is raised to Rs. 20, the total additional cost will come to about Rs. 14 or 15 lakhs and not 30 or 40 lakhs. I think that an expenditure of 14 or 15 lakhs of rupees is an absolute necessity to satisfy the thirty thousand village officers.

11-45 a.m. “No doubt the question will arise as to how we are to get Rs. 14 or 15 lakhs and probably some of the gentlemen who are going to reply on behalf of Government may say ‘we fully sympathise with these people, we know that they want something, and yet there is no money available.’ Well, all I can say is that in the last few years, or rather for the last twenty years, the expenditure over establishments has gone up by leaps and bounds, so much so that it has gone up by over 300 per cent; and when the Government have been able to devise some means or other for meeting this increased expenditure on establishments, and when they have increased the pay of officers who are getting such fat salaries as Rs. 2,000 or Rs. 3,000—when they have been able to find means for all this expenditure, they must, by any means whatever, certainly keep the 30,000 people contented and above wants. It is not for us to say as to how the Government should find funds. We have been told over and over again in recent times that any expenditure would be absolutely impossible in the present state of financial stringency. However, for all the expenditure that the Government had to make, they were able to find money from some source or other, in some cases by making retrenchment and in other cases by various other means. So far as we are concerned, it is not for us to say as to how the Government should find funds. All that we say is that these poor people, who have to supply all the sinews of war in times of emergencies, and have to keep accounts, should be kept above wants, so that at any time they may not be induced by fair or foul means to go against the Government or to give up their appointments the latter of which, if they do, will lead to useless and dishonest people getting into their places. On the whole it cannot be denied that the village officers as a class have been satisfactory, have been honest, have been faithful and loyal in the discharge of their duties, and if any class of people deserves encouragement, it is the village officers.

“Many of us I suppose have met these village officers in the election campaign. We must have noticed what their influence is and what their responsibilities are in their respective villages. In spite of their responsibilities and in spite of their influence, these officers think they are very badly paid, so much so this feeling might at any time be translated into action against the Government. Therefore we should take some precaution as it were and keep these people contented. It may be said that it is difficult to find the whole

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Mr. E. W. LEGH :—" I am very glad, Sir, that there is no ground for my suggestion. Sir, if village officers are given the hope that in return for their support to hon. Members in this House resolutions of this kind will be brought forward, the finances of this Province would, I think, in a very short time, be in a disastrous condition.

" Now, Sir, listening to the speech of the hon. Mover I was not able to understand clearly what class of village officers are to be given this minimum of Rs. 20. In his motion he simply says ' village officers ', and so I was preparing the defence thinking that this motion had reference to a particular class of village officers only, viz., headmen and karnams. Now, I see that he referred to vettis and that the seconder of his motion referred to another class of village officers, viz., talayaris."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" I never referred them as village officers. I know well the difference between the village officers and the village establishment."

Mr. E. W. LEGH :—" I take it that this motion is therefore confined to headmen and karnams only. Do I understand the hon. Member correctly ? "

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" Yes, Sir. I include also water and revenue monigars and assistant karnams.. We all know what ' village officer ' means; it includes headmen, revenue monigars, karnams, assistant karnams, etc."

Mr. E. W. LEGH :—" Now, Sir, I do not know whether the hon. Mover intends to include also the headmen and karnams of proprietary villages who have been recently given an increase of pay. I should be grateful to him if he would enlighten me on this point."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" I have only included village officers of the ryotwari villages for the present."

Mr. E. W. LEGH :—" Sir, I take it that the Members of this House will, in the first instance, ask, what is the justification for giving the concession which the hon. Mover is asking for. The only points which I understood him to make on behalf of the village officers were two. The first is that it is necessary to satisfy the officers themselves. Now, Sir, if that is the consideration for giving them increased salaries, there will be many members of the Public Services who would request him to give evidence on their behalf before the Royal Commission on Public Services. If we are to give to an officer the pay that he demands in order to satisfy him, then I think the cost of the public establishment will have to be very largely increased in a very short time.

" There was one other point which was made by the hon. Mover and that was that certain other officers or rather menial officers were paid more than these officers. Hon. Members know that the amount of pay a man draws does not always represent the value of his post. Now, if you go down to the villages with the post of a peon in one hand and the post of a village headman in the other—the post of peon carrying Rs. 20 and that of the headman carrying only Rs. 15—I do not think there would be much doubt as to which post people would prefer to have. They would surely prefer the post of the village headman with its prestige and position to that of a peon which latter post people take in order to get a living. Besides, the question of pay is partly governed by the law of supply and demand. So long as we can find

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suitable and reliable persons who are willing to take up the post for the pay which is at present offered for it, I do not think we have any right to ask hon. Members for any increase whatever.

"Let us look at the facts for a moment. It is within the memory of hon. Members of this House, and the hon. Mover has already drawn our attention to the fact that the pay of karnams in ryotwari villages was raised as recently as in April 1920. The pay of the headman was raised only last year, viz., from 15th August 1922. These had to be done owing to the exceptional rise in prices due to the war, and I think the House will agree that prices have not increased since then. Under the circumstances it is for the hon. Mover to justify his proposal to the House in the light of these facts. He has to show that since the date on which these increases were made there have been causes operating which have increased the cost of living, and I leave it to the House to decide whether the hon. Member has, so far, in his speech given us any reason for asking for the large increase which he is asking.

"Then we come to the financial aspect of the question. I regret I am quite unable to understand how the hon. Mover suggested that the cost of this proposal would be only 14 or 15 lakhs. I have got the actual figures here giving the cost of the increased pay given in 1920-22 and the cost of the increased pay which would be necessitated by the present proposal. The cost of the village officers' pay in 1920 was 16 lakhs and the cost after the increased pay was given is 25. The difference between the pay in 1919-20 and the present day pay (1923-24) is 9 lakhs. This includes the reduction which the hon. Mover referred to. When the pay of the headman was raised, the cost increased from $12\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs in 1920 to 16.79 lakhs in 1923-24. So the total increased cost under these two heads came to nine plus four or 13 lakhs. Sir, the cost of the rise now suggested is more than that. The cost of the ryotwari karnams alone would be 8.18 lakhs and of ryotwari headman 8.52 lakhs, i.e., a rise of $16\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs for the ryotwari karnams and headmen alone. If proprietary estates are included, the total cost runs up to 40.70 lakhs for karnams and headmen alone.

"Now, the next question before us will be, where is the money to be found? I know that the hon. Mover suggested that the Government must find it. Well, Sir, that would have been a proper suggestion in the pre-Reform days. But surely Members of this House have by now realized that it is this House itself which ultimately has to find the funds; that they will have to cut out of some departmental provision made in the budget and vote for it. We do not yet know exactly what this year's budget will reveal to us. But as far as I can understand from facts which have already come to my notice, there is no probability at all that there will be a large provincial balance from which we can draw 16 lakhs with which to increase the pay of the village officers.

"The next possible method would be to meet the amount by further reductions in the staff of village officers. Now, Sir, the hon. Mover has already referred to this reduction. I do not understand his figures when he said that the cost of village officers had been reduced. The total cost of village officers has very much gone up at each rise, as I have shown already. The total cost of ryotwari karnams and the headmen alone has gone up from 39 lakhs to 67.65 lakhs, in four years. And the reduction of the number of village officers has not in any way

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reduced the total cost. The reduction has been very small and not at all proportionate to the extra cost incurred by the increase in salaries. The total cost involved has gone up from 70 lakhs to 121 lakhs, a difference of 50 lakhs altogether in these four years. If we are to make a further reduction adequate to meet the amount of 16 lakhs now required, we should have to make drastic reductions. I ask the House whether it is their wish that such a thing should be done, or whether they think that it would be a real benefit, that in order to pay certain officers larger sums, certain others will have to lose their posts altogether.

“Well, then, Sir, the next suggestion would be that taxation should in some way be imposed to meet the cost of these village officers. The House would remember that in the year 1922—only last year in February—two Bills were presented to this House with the object of providing funds for increasing the pay of village officers. These two Bills were thrown out by this House. Each of them proposed that the cost should be levied from the villages themselves, that is to say as a land cess. I think one would very properly argue that if the pay of the village officers should be increased the cost should fall on the villages themselves. I do not think it will be right to ask other people to pay for the cost of the village officers. It seems to me that if the village officers are to be benefited, the cost should be found in that particular way. It is for the House to decide whether they desire that such a Bill should be introduced. There is a saying that he who wills the end, wills also for the means, that is to say, if a man desires a certain thing to take place he should also be prepared to take the means which would make it possible. Then, Sir, I would ask the hon. Members of this House, or such of them as would vote for this motion, whether they are prepared to go the whole length, not only to vote for this Resolution, but also to provide funds where necessary, and if necessary, to undertake taxation for that purpose.

“Lastly, there is one other possible way of getting over the difficulty. I think the House will see that if the cost of village officers is going on increasing, there would, sooner or later, come a time when it would be cheaper to abolish the village officers altogether and get the work done in some other way. Now, Sir, the House will see that, supposing that in four villages the cost of the karnams at Rs. 20 per village comes to Rs. 80 in all, it would be cheaper for the Government, and possibly in some way better, to pay any one revenue inspector at Rs. 35 to Rs. 60 and get rid of the karnams altogether. That would not benefit the village officers. It is one possible method by which the problem of the increased pay for village officers could be met, and it might possibly be the result of continuous increase in their pay especially when such increases cannot be justified.”

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—“Mr. Deputy President, when this motion was first made in this House, I was sceptical as to the attitude which I should take up. But after hearing the speech of the Member of the heaven-born service, who spoke on behalf of the Government and opposed the Resolution, I have clearly made up my mind, and it is my duty, to vote for the Resolution and persuade hon. Members of this House who have not already made up their minds to vote for this Resolution also. The hon. Member has referred somewhat cynically to the election pledges of Members who may have been elected on the pledge of increasing the salary of this poor-paid service. Sir, there are no village officers in my electorate. I believe there is none.

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Therefore I am not bound by any election pledges whatever. But I should like to ask the House very seriously whether it is a matter of honour or dishonour to give election pledges to your voters, whether they are village officers or anybody else. They may well ask us, You ask our votes and we will give them to you if you will serve our interests—public interests and not private interests. Public servants, in the interests of the public, must be paid a minimum living wage. I do not think, Sir, there is any code of ethics by which we ought not to give such pledges. Hon. Members here have given those pledges—I know some who have given those pledges. I have no doubt in my mind that hon. Members would keep them even in spite of the cynicism of the hon. Member who spoke on behalf of the Government. And after all, these are poor-paid servants, and it is our duty to stand by them and see that they get a living wage. The hon. the Mover of the Resolution has made the scope of the Resolution very small. He only wants some increase in the pay of the headmen and karnams of the ryotwari villages. But it is very strange to hear from the hon. Member who spoke for the Government, whether the satisfaction of the officers was a relevant factor in fixing their pay. I see, Sir, from the evidence that the Members of the Great Service to which the hon. Member belongs have given—I read it in the newspapers—they seem to think that no other consideration ought to weigh except their satisfaction. Member after Member insisted that it should outweigh all other considerations, and they have not at all considered how the taxpayer is going to be bled white, in order to pay the already highly-paid service. If therefore men who are already overpaid according to my humble judgment, want a Commission and say that for no other reason except their satisfaction they ought to be paid more, surely is it not a fanciful argument to suggest that men who do honest and hard work, and are paid starvation wages, ought to be paid only to the extent the public purse can afford? I do hope that the hon. Member spoke for himself and not for the Government when he said that the satisfaction of the officers is no relevant consideration. No Government, Sir, deserving to call itself civilized and desirous of getting the best service out of its servants can afford to neglect their reasonable requests, provided they are reasonable, and do not ask for fanciful salaries. And is it right to say that in this country 20 rupees a month for the village headman is an unreasonable salary? Surely I do hope that we shall not have one thing for the Indian Civil Service and another thing for the village service.

“Sir, we had another lecture upon pay not representing status or prestige. I make a present of that statement to the Indian Civil Service. That service has so much prestige in this country and they may therefore exchange some of that prestige for the money that they are getting and release the taxpayer of his burden. They want prestige; they want money. Then, when it comes to the village service they are asked to be satisfied with prestige. The village headman is passing rich with Rs. 15 a month. Surely, Sir, what is sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose also.

“Then there was a strange theory of supply and demand. I believe that the hon. Member who spoke on behalf of the Government had this theory in mind of people who undersold and underbought their services and went about hawking appointments to find out people who are really starving and would accept even five rupees. If they are anxious to get anybody and everybody they can get men on five rupees a month. Is that the test I ask

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that any Government should consider? The Government had some idea in fixing the pay of their servants. If it is suggested that because we can get men and therefore we reduce their pay, I submit to the House that we shall advertise for membership in the Indian Civil Service on the Continent, in America, and I am sure that we can get men for half the pay they are now getting. To suggest therefore that we should apply the doctrine of supply and demand is to break the fundamental functions of a Government which calls itself civilized.

"Then, Sir, we had the other doctrine that the pay of karnams had been recently raised and that it ought not to be raised now. Shortly after the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, we had increases all round for all the superior services. They now claimed they were living in atrocious poverty and discontent and found themselves unable to keep their body and soul together. Then a Commission has been brought out in spite of the refusal of the Assembly to vote for it. Now, Mr. Deputy President, the present demand for increase in the pay of the village officers is not altogether unjustifiable. The hon. Member who spoke for the Government asked, 'What are the causes that had intervened between the last increase and the present time to necessitate a new increase.' But was the last increase adequate? No, it was not.

"Again the hon. Member said that the data on which the hon. Mover proceeded were wrong. I was thinking that he was going to smash the whole thing. But I find it was only two and a half lakhs or two and three-fourths lakhs—the hon. the Mover said, I believe, 14 or 15 lakhs—and the answer of the Government was 16½ lakhs. It does not require much arithmetic to see that the difference is not very great.

"Sir, it is a strange theory that this House should be asked to find the money for this. Under the reformed constitution, this House has not got absolute control over the purse. To suggest that we should find the money and the Government will sit quiet without making the necessary adjustments in their expenditure in order to find the money, is saying something which the House will not easily swallow. Whenever any beneficial measure is brought forward, we are met with the stereotyped answer of the Government 'Find the money'. It assumes that we are satisfied with the present scale of expenditure. There are two ways of paying the way: one is taxation and the other is retrenchment. Then we can find the money for these village officers. Apart from that, Mr. Deputy President, whenever any proposition is brought forward by us, to challenge us to find money is impudent. If they say they cannot find the money, let them cross the floor of the House and give place to other people who can find the money. To say that they cannot find the money and sit tightly in their places is to say something which no responsible Government in the world says.

"If you cannot find money, Sir, please give place to others who will find the money for it either by retrenchment or by any other means. I have nothing more to say, Sir; I only want to warn the House against the unnecessary dilemma with which the hon. Member for Government has threatened us, namely, that if we vote for this motion, there will have to be a regrouping of villages. This House will not approve of such a course. This House will not take away with one hand what it gave with the other. I am afraid that, when this motion is carried, as I hope it will be, there may be another attempt made to prevent its scope by regrouping the villages in the Presidency.

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[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

"Before I sit down, Sir, I do most earnestly appeal to the hon. Ministers to give the lead to the House on this matter. We are anxious to note what their opinions are on the question. If they wish to support the Reserved half of the Government, let them get up and give their reasons for such a course and not give a silent vote and appeal to their party men to vote with them. Sir, this is not a matter for this party or that. This is a matter in which the lives and happiness of thousands of individuals are involved, most of them belonging to communities other than my own small community, and I do hope that the hon. the Ministers will not keep a Sphinx-like silence, lift their hands and cry out 'Happy family,' but let them stand up and say: 'Support it or oppose it' and give an honest, clear lead to the House."

MR. R. VEERIAN :—"Sir, I am glad that a motion has been brought forward to improve the prospects of the village officers, but, Sir, I am sorry that the hon. Mover has not foreseen the practical difficulties involved in the acceptance of the resolution. The pay of the village officers was increased only three years ago and now an increase of Rs. 5 per head will amount to an enormous amount of money. We shall have to find the necessary funds and that we can do only at the expense of other activities which are bound to suffer on this account. The increase now proposed is indeed a high jump from one end of the ladder to the other and it involves lakhs of expenditure. That, Sir, is my sincere opinion. I am very sorry, Sir, to note that the village officers are the only persons coming within the category of the village establishment whose prospects are sought to be improved by this resolution. The hon. Mover has not realized that the other menials who are part of the village establishment have also a claim for similar treatment. I am sorry, Sir, that my friends want reform only at the top and at the middle and fail to realize that it should begin at the bottom. Ignoring that all reform should begin from the bottom, we proceed straight to the top and the middle. What is the use of such a reform? I believe that hon. Members realize what I mean. I am sure there are several members of the depressed classes who come under the category of village establishment and their pay has not been taken into consideration. If the hon. Mover had taken the least trouble to put their case before this House, certainly I would have great regard for him; I would admire him. With all his eloquence, he has not satisfied this hon. House. It is a great pity, Sir, that my hon. Friend, Mr. Satyamurti, has not also convinced this House. The hon. Members have not taken the least trouble to put forth the grievances of the lowest-paid classes of the village establishment. I think, Sir, I am not, out of my ardour, exaggerating their claims. They are very responsible persons in collecting revenue. If they do not do their work, the village officers will become non-entities. Not one of them will shine unless they co-operate with these menials. From the very beginning, Sir, we have not done anything to ameliorate their condition. I am very sorry that with all their eloquence, my hon. Friends, Mr. Venkataramana Ayyangar and Mr. Satyamurti, have not done anything to do justice to these persons who are paid most inadequately. What is the use of simply pleading for one class of people excluding the other class that also comes under the category of village establishment? We should press their claims in this Council. The hon. Mover fails to realize that these people too are an indispensable part of the village administration and that their claims too should be considered. My hon. Friends who have spoken in support of the motion have not been able to convince this learned House with facts and

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figures why the village officials alone should be given increase of pay. I appeal to my hon. Friend, the Mover, not to press the motion. With these few words, I oppose the motion."

Mr. G. RAMESWARA RAO :—" Mr. President, Sir, while I appreciate the argument of my previous speaker and if I rise to oppose this motion, it is on other grounds also. My previous speaker has said that the resolution seeks to improve the condition of only one class of people and neglects the other class who also form part of the village administration. My hon. Friend has rightly said that the whole staff must be looked upon as one solid entity. It has been said, however, that the pay of the village officers has recently been increased, but, Sir, what the Government have really done is to limit the scope of such an increase by cutting short the establishment and so making many of these village officials feel the loss of their appointments very keenly. What has really been done in the name of giving higher salaries to one or two of these officials of the village, is cutting short the establishment, removing many vettians and talaiyaris. Sir, when there is only one talaiyari or one vettian in a village, if unfortunately by the use of a bomb or gun which were being mentioned just before there is a murder in that village, the vettian or the talaiyari is asked to hurry off with a report of the case to the magistrate or the police, and then, the revenue inspector comes to ajmaish a particular land, the village karnam has to carry the chain to measure the land. The hon. Member who spoke for the Government has talked about the prestige of the village officers. Where is the prestige, Sir, when the karnam is asked to carry the chain all the way? The question of prestige is also lost sight of when a large part of the village establishment is dispensed with by a regrouping of the villages. It is only raised whenever an increase in the pay of the staff is asked for. Again, Sir, there is a divergence of views regarding the establishment itself. Difference is sought to be made between service and service. Both my predecessor and the hon. Member for the University have stood for the advaitic theory of making no difference between service and service. The difference made by the Government is between the superior and inferior services and that made by my predecessor the village officers and menials. It is only adding to the differences where there really ought to be none. If you want to raise the salary of the village officers, do raise it if you are competent to raise the necessary funds, if you can convince the people that they must necessarily bear the burden which the villager should bear for the support and advancement of the village officer. If you are unable to do so, then leave it as it is. Do not ask the Government on the ground of their prestige for a higher salary and make the Government get rid of a large portion of the staff. Do not tell the village staff that they should leave their service and go abegging. If, as I said, you are unable to increase their pay without at the same time a curtailment, the strength of the village staff retain the present strength of the service and leave their prestige as it is. Sir, a motion for the partial advancement of a section of the village staff is altogether unjustifiable. Believe me, Sir, when I say that what has been done in the name of raising the salaries of the village officers has resulted in untold miseries. I am not going to contaminate the pure atmosphere of this House by narrating in detail the corruption that has been practised in the mufassal in the name of grouping villages. It is not justifiable for me to state specific cases, because the matter should come before a proper tribunal or the executive in charge of administration. You can take it from me, Sir, that there is a

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loud complaint against the grouping of the villages which has always been attended with insurmountable burden to the village officers who feel that their sense of vanity should be respected and find the same very difficult to cope with. They have to run into enormous debts to keep up their position as village officers even for the paltry sum that they receive. That is the position and I state it with authority. I myself belong to karnams' family and I have consulted many hon. Friends here who are similarly members of the karnams' (Reddies) families and we are unanimously of opinion that the village officer rather abhors the scheme of raising the salary because he is always stared in the face by that mighty demon the regrouping of villages and cutting short of the number of appointments. The incumbents, he is afraid, will be reduced and one will be asked to do the duties of two and more. Twenty-five to thirty per cent of the staff is dispensed with, and when the officer feels his work more heavy he is told that as his pay has been increased he must do more work. In one village, I know, the extent has been increased to 12 miles and how can we expect one karnam with a diminished staff to carry the chain on his back and ajimaish the fields with the revenue inspector in such a vast area? We have added to the large number of revenue inspectors who sit in judgment over the karnams. And when there is a large number of revenue inspectors who are keenly watching the work of the karnams, there is a great danger of the village karnams losing their appointments unless they are all vigilance and all eyes. When the jurisdiction is so vast, is it human to expect the karnam to go round all the 12 miles and have a proper ajimaish of the village? It is too much to expect of them. Now the Government threatens us that if you vote for the resolution and wish an increase in the emoluments of the village officers, it will only result in a diminution of the number of incumbents. We are not going to bargain with the Government for more pay and less establishment. In the name of efficiency of village administration, in the name of humanity, I ask that the village officers should not be asked to bear a greater burden. The village officers do not want increased salary if it will result in curtailment of the establishment and entail additional responsibilities. Sir, reference was made to pledges given at elections. You may take it from me, Sir, that there was no such pledge given by any of us so far as our districts are concerned. My hon. Friend, Mr. Ranga Reddi, coming from Kurnool, has not given such a pledge at all. I do not say, Sir, that we gave no promises, but I should say that we have given no such pledges. I sounded many other hon. Members who said that they too had not given any such. When Members have been returned to this Council without giving any such pledges, it is not fair to hit the Mover who is actuated by the best of motives with the argument that he has given a pledge to redeem which he has brought forward this motion. Pledges or no pledges, if it is possible, it is our duty to vote for the resolution. But if the Government bargains and says, 'accept less officers', then I am not going to accept it. It is an unconditional demand that is put forward by the hon. Mover and if it is not accepted without any bargaining, we must reject the proposal. In virtue of the fact that such a bargain is now made by the Government, I am obliged to vote against the motion."

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR :—" Mr. Deputy President, Sir, my acquaintance with the village officers did not begin with the elections. It is at least twenty years old and I came across the village officers more intimately from my work in the co-operative field. My previous speaker found

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fault with the hon. Mover for restricting the scope of the resolution only to one class of village officers and my explanation to him is this. It is not that the hon. Mover is very partial in his sympathies or limited in them, but it is because he knows the class of officers, the particular officers of the village, who are more hard hit than the other class. It is an economic question. These village karnams belong to what is called the respectable middle class and all the world knows that in these days of economic pressure it is this middle class that suffer the most. It is they that have to keep up the usual paraphernalia, the usual expenditure of a middle-class household. I take it that it is for that reason that the hon. Mover of this resolution has restricted himself to that particular class, not because that he is not sympathetic to the lower strata of village officers.

“I would, therefore, request even my hon. Friend, Mr. Rameswara Rao, and my other hon. Friends to support this motion. Mr. Deputy President, Sir, we are all familiar with the theory that the village officer is given larger credit, larger status, larger prestige and all that sort of thing. Of course, he can stand for election to this Council, but this question is more an economic question than any other, and in considering any scheme for the betterment of his salary we have to remember not his respectability but the fact that he is a full-time officer. My hon. Friend, Mr. Srinivasa Ayyangar, has detailed or rather referred to as many as 40 or 50 duties the village officer has to perform, and some of those duties are very very important. Everything that you can conceive of in village administration is in his charge, and yet only paying a pittance of Rs. 7 or 8 and odd and saying that he has larger prestige to his credit is cheating a poor class of officers. The speaker on behalf of the Government has said that since 1920 the prices have not risen, but whoever in the world admitted that in 1920 the salaries were sufficient, or that they satisfied the village officers. The salaries were unsatisfactory then, they are unsatisfactory now, and they will be unsatisfactory until at least the wage which the hon. Mover has recommended in his proposition is granted. Even then I think it will be unsatisfactory, but considering the poor condition of our finances, only so much rise has been recommended. It is also well known to everyone who has got any acquaintance with village officers, that the village officer in spite of his various and numerous duties—45 as my hon. Friend, Mr. Srinivasa Ayyangar, would have it—has got also what is called mamul supplies. Many of us know, and the hon. the Deputy President knows very well with his intimate knowledge of the country and the village officers particularly, that these supplies, whatever may be the official description of them, are a real burden on the shoulders of these people. The village officer is also the common host of the village; there are no hotels in the villages and they have to feed the in-comers, and especially men of the high castes they are bound to feed. I think that several of my hon. Friends here in their election campaigns or otherwise would have enjoyed the hospitality of the village officers (hear, hear). In fact, one village officer told me in a conference over which I presided that the village officer cannot be sure at all that the rice which was boiling in the pot would be coming into his mouth; some one or other comes and all that is cooked goes to him. I would request hon. Members of this House to remember all these things. There is no use saying that the pay was increased in 1920 and it must have satisfied them. The pay was never adequate, and it will never be adequate until it comes at least to what any other full-time officer in the mufassal receives. But we

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are a cautious set of people and with the nightmare of the budget before us we are proposing quite a modest increase in their salaries. Sir, I also sympathize with my hon. Friend, Mr. Rameswara Rao, in his speech, as he said, against this motion. But every word that he said was in favour of this motion with this difference, that he was afraid that the so-called sympathy of this House might after all end in disaster, because the poor officer may find himself reduced owing to any regrouping in consequence of increased salaries. I am also aware from my intimate knowledge of the district which I have the honour to represent, North Arcot, that the regrouping of villages has done immense havoc to this class of people. Not only has the system been at fault, but the manner in which the regrouping has been carried out has spelt ruin to many officers. Apart from this fear of regrouping, the other fear referred to by Mr. Rameswara Rao and also vaguely hinted at by the hon. Member for Government is the abolition of the posts of these village officers. It is that nightmare that makes these village officers say, as my hon. Friend put it, 'Save us from these increases'. Sir, I am afraid that my hon. Friend, Mr. Rameswara Rao, has taken a narrow view of the matter. If any such attempt is made, this House will take care to press on the Government the interests of the village officers and see that the abolition is not carried out. Then, Sir, there is the ground, often trotted out, that our finances cannot support any large increase. The hon. Member for the University has sufficiently laid threadbare the faultiness of this argument. Now-a-days, whenever we open a newspaper, we are reading of huge demands—demands not made with good grace, but demands in their literal sense—for increases which would cost lakhs and crores, but when a large body of people who are ill-paid and yet who are very important, who form the foundation of all good Government, comes and asks for a pittance of an extra two annas a day, it does not come well from the Government to say there are no funds. The budget will soon be upon us and this House may be trusted to find the means of paying this class of people adequately. Therefore, Mr. Deputy President, I join my humble voice in supporting the resolution moved by my hon. Friend for Coimbatore, and request that all Members of this House may vote for it with one voice."

Rao Bahadur A. S. KRISHNA RAO PANTULU :—" Sir, I wish that this question had been discussed on its merits and with due regard only to the financial considerations of the subject. The hon. Member who spoke for the Government has unfortunately brought into discussion certain aspects which could have been avoided in a discussion of this problem. The question of the pledges made or which might have been made or which he took it might have been made at the time of elections, could have been avoided or should not have been brought into play in a discussion of this question. It must have been presumed, to start with, that a motion like this moved by a Member of this Council is moved with a full sense of the responsibility he owes to himself, to the country and to the Government. In moving a motion of this description and even in coming to a decision on this question, it may be taken that the question of the statements which might or could have been made would have formed a certain ground which may be taken into account. Another matter which might have been avoided by the hon. Member who spoke on behalf of the Government is this: that in the case of increase of salaries of village officers alone, he should not have called upon the Members of this House to find ways and means of providing for the increased expenditure. That is one

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of the difficulties which we have noticed in dealing with the claims of these officers put forward on this occasion as also on previous occasions. If the attempts made to introduce Bills for the purpose of collecting cesses to provide enhanced salaries for village officers were rejected in this House, it was because they found it inequitable, unjust and improper that in their case alone the House should be called upon to vote additional taxation in order to provide for an increase of over two crores of rupees. Especially in the case of a Bill introduced after the Reforms, when no question was asked as to how the additional sum to provide for increases should be procured or whether the country could bear that additional cost in providing for the additional expenditure, and when a vote for special taxation was asked for, this House very properly rejected the proposal. And if any such attempt is made hereafter, I have not the slightest doubt that this House would reject it with even greater force and vigour. Therefore, leaving aside these irrelevant considerations brought into this discussion, I wish that this House would come to a decision only as to whether the rate of Rs. 20 which is proposed as the minimum pay of village officers is reasonable or unreasonable. I am rather sorry that the hon. Mover of this resolution has circumscribed its scope by confining it only to ryotwari areas, but for the present we shall be satisfied with the limitations which he has placed, though the resolution itself does not impose this limitation, namely, restricting its scope to ryotwari areas. I may myself state, Sir, on this occasion that I have not been able to find any justification for any wide divergence between the treatment accorded to village officers in ryotwari areas and that accorded to those in zamindari areas. I am quite aware of the financial difficulties of the problem, but when we do attempt a solution of the problem, we must be fair and just to all classes of these officers. What are the circumstances under which it was resolved that even in the case of proprietary estates, village officers should be paid their salaries by the Government? Could it have been anticipated that persons who are doing fairly the same onerous duties as others should be placed especially in a disadvantageous position? That could not have been contemplated. Though I personally would think that a limit like the one which the hon. Mover has chosen to place on the resolution is not a reasonable one, still I would put it to the House to consider whether the minimum of Rs. 20 which has been suggested as the pay of the village officer can be said to be an unreasonable one. That is the first plain question which this House ought to set itself to consider. If it should think that Rs. 20 is too high for one occupying the position and performing the duties of a village officer the House may reject the resolution. But if, on the other hand, it should consider that in view of the large increases we have been providing for others owing to the rise in prices this increase is quite reasonable and just, this House, apart from other financial considerations, has no other alternative but to vote for the resolution. That is the plain question now before the House. If this motion is voted upon, the effect is this: recommendation will be made to Government and then it will be for the Government to consider and make proposals for adjustment of expenditure under various heads and to see in what manner effect can be given to the decision of this House. We need not therefore speculate as to the manner in which the Government would be able to give effect to this motion, before we make up our minds, for so long as we are satisfied that the limit or minimum we suggest is reasonable and modest, I think our duty is plain and it is that we should vote for this motion."

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Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—“ Mr. President, Sir, I do not know whether I am called upon to speak on the merits of the resolution, but I think it would be well for hon. Members of the House and especially those who are new to know something of the history of the question of the revision of pay of the village officers. Sir, the Salaries Committee which was presided over by Mr. Marjoribanks took up the question of the revision of the salaries of the village karnams and fixed their pay at Rs. 15. After that an agitation was seriously started by the village officers, the monegars and the headmen, and it was felt that their position was very much worsened by the fact that the karnams who were supposed to occupy an inferior status got a higher salary. The second Salaries Committee, which was composed of the Members of this Legislative Council, went into this question rather elaborately and their recommendations are found in the report which they submitted. And they considered that the village officers should be paid a salary of Rs. 15. They further submitted that from the evidence tendered before them, it was found that the village officers were more anxious to retain the hereditary character of their offices, and in some districts at least they were less anxious that their salaries should be increased. And if you go through the report, you will find that the Salaries Committee's suggestion that a distinction should be drawn between districts and districts, and that in some districts the village officers might be honorary and that in other districts where their services could not be secured except on payment, the rate of pay should be Rs. 15. My hon. Friend from Cuddapah, I believe, subsequently brought forward a resolution that the pay of the village officers should be fixed at Rs. 12 a month and my Friend from Bellary suggested an amendment to the effect that it should be fixed at Rs. 15, an amendment which was carried by the vote of this House.

“ After that, the hon. the Revenue Member, on the 27th March 1922, 3 p.m. came to the House with a supplementary demand of nearly 20 lakhs of rupees in order to provide for the revised salary on the basis of Rs. 15 a month for all the village officers and for all the village headmen who were to be affected by the proposal. The amount to be voted by the Legislative Council was intended to provide for an increase in the pay of every village officer who was drawing Rs. 15 a month and who, according to the professions of this House and presumably, according to the opinion of the hon. the Revenue Member—his converted opinion, if I may say so—deserved to have a salary of Rs. 15. Between the dates March 1922 and April 1923, some change seems to have come over the Government. For we find for the first time that some time about April of this year the question of amalgamation of villages has been taken up seriously, and in district after district villages after villages have been re-grouped, two villages being converted into one village with a single headman in charge of it. I charge the Government with not being fair to this Legislative Council (hear, hear !); I charge the hon. the Finance Member and the hon. the Revenue Member with having done something behind the back of this Legislative Council. When we voted the supplementary demand, we did not dream for a minute that this proposal of re-grouping of the villages was going to be taken up. We voted for the supplementary grant so that the pay of every single village officer who was getting a salary of Rs. 12 in March 1922 would be raised to Rs. 15. That was the basis on which the calculation of the supplementary demand was made. I ask, Sir, by what authority, under whose order, did the Government make

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LAW AND JUSTICE.

Report of the Committee to make suggestions regarding the separation of executive and judicial functions.

8 Q.—MR. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR: Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state—

(a) whether the report of the Committee appointed to make suggestions regarding the separation of executive and judicial functions has been received and whether there is any intention on the part of the Government to publish the same for public criticism ;

(b) whether it is a fact that if the main recommendations of the Committee are accepted, they will lead to a redistribution of the jurisdiction of all the present revenue and criminal officers ?

A.—(a) The report of the Committee has been received and will be placed before the Council as soon as possible together with a statement of the Government's views thereon.

(b) The recommendations of the Committee would necessitate an alteration in the jurisdiction of practically every Revenue Divisional Officer and Subdivisional Magistrate. A certain amount of alteration in the jurisdiction of subordinate magistrates would also be required.

MR. S. SATYAMURTI:—“ May I ask the hon. Law Member] whether instead of the vague phrase ‘ as soon as possible ’ he can give us an approximate idea of the time when he hopes to place a statement of the Government's views thereon on the table ?

The hon. MR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—“ I have just revised the draft order and it is probably in the press now.”

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Levy of railway cess by district boards.

9 Q.—MR. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR: Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(a) the district boards that were levying a railway cess until the new Local Boards Act of 1920 was passed and put into force ;

(b) the district boards that ceased to levy the railway cess after the new Act came into force, the reasons for the discontinuance of the cess, the total sum accumulated till then to the credit of each of these boards and the arrangements, if any, made for its disposal ; and

(c) the district boards that are at present levying the railway cess and the amount that remains under that head to the credit of each of them ?

A.—(a) (1) Arcot,	(6) Guntur.	(12) Salem.
South.	(7) Kistna.	(13) South Kanara.
(2) Coimbatore.	(8) Kurnool.	(14) Tinnevely.
(3) Cuddapah.	(9) Madura.	(15) Trichinopoly.
(4) Ganjam.	(10) Nellore.	(16) Vizagapatam.
(5) Godavari.	(11) Ramnad.	

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character of the powers, the privileges and the duties of the village headmen. If, therefore, I do not vote for the proposition of the hon. the Mover, it is not because I am in less sympathy with the village headman in his getting Rs. 20, but it is because I think that, under the guise of increasing the salary, more men will have to go to the wall. In several places I know that these people would rather be honorary officers, given a better status. We have pleaded for him a better status in the village; we have pleaded that he may not be treated arrogantly by these petty officials, and I do not know how much has been done to him in respect to all these things. Depriving him of his hereditary village headmanship is not doing fair to us who have never asked for that. When we went to the villages we were puzzled for what reason the Government took up the proposal of amalgamating these villages and under whose authority it was done. Was it the Retrenchment Committee whose report is yet to come before us? I should like to know whether the Retrenchment Committee had any hand in this. It was not a proposal which was put forward by any responsible section of this Legislative Council either. Therefore, Sir, for these reasons, I strongly object to the proposal, because I think that that will be a thin end of the wedge to remove these headmen so that they may put in their place S.S.L.C.'s."

MR. P. ANJANEYULU:—"Mr. President, I thought that this was one of those questions where there would be less of controversy and more of support, because it is after all more to benefit this class of Government servants (viz., the village officers) themselves than the hon. the Mover brought forward this proposition. I do not think there is any one in this House who would like to have a low-paid servant and who is always starved. I should have thought that even the Government Members themselves would sympathetically view this proposition, and I was rather startled when I found that these village officers were merely treated as so much of human commodity based on the theory of supply and demand. We know that the cost of living in the whole of this country has risen considerably owing to various reasons which it is unnecessary for me to formulate here. Even the coolie (daily labourer) gets on an average 8 to 12 annas a day, whereas these village officers whose duties have already been enumerated get only something less and they have to discharge practically almost all the responsible duties in the village. If the hon. the Mover has restricted his proposition to the village karnam and the headmen only, it is perhaps for financial reasons; and if he can find ways and means for the enhancement of the salaries of these people, he thinks, possibly, that he may come forward next time with another proposition for the enhancement of salaries for the other establishment also. It is no doubt true that the solution of this question rests on the state of the provincial finances and it may perhaps be as well to put all our heads together and see whether it is not possible, under the circumstances, to increase their pay. I should think that no sympathetic Member here would feel that a pay of Rs. 15 per month to the village officers would be a sufficient remuneration for all the duties they have to discharge. If this question is to be viewed in the light in which it ought to be viewed sympathetically, with due regard to the financial aspect of the question, I should have thought that there would have been a better understanding between those who are opposing this proposition and those who are in favour of it. Anyhow, Sir, on the principle that the salary as paid to these village officers is quite inadequate and insufficient for the proper discharge of their duties, I support this motion."

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Mr. J. A. DAVIS:—"Sir, for the same reasons as were given by Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar, I strongly support this resolution. I take the very reverse view of the proposition from the one he took. He said that if this motion were to be given effect to, the village officers would be reduced in their number. We should see that they are not thus reduced in number in giving them the salary of Rs. 20 a month on the ground that Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar put it. Our object now is to see that the salaries of these men are enhanced; and because once before, when their salaries were enhanced, their numbers were cut down, we should not now presume that the same thing is going to happen again. It is our duty to see that such a thing does not happen. If we are satisfied that these men must be given a living wage, then we should not withhold our support to the proposition for the mere reason that if we support the motion, something is going to happen and that, therefore, we should not support it. With these few words, Sir, I strongly support this motion."

Mr. G. F. PADDISON:—"Sir, I have been spending all my time for the past four years in considering questions of wages and questions of pay. I have personally been in touch with the village officers and have spent most of my time for about 20 years in their very pleasant company. I need hardly say, therefore, that this question appeals to me personally very strongly. At the time of the coal strike in England a railway porter once said to me, 'Well, what we railway men really want is that the whole people should get a fair pay'; that is to say, they were anxious that nothing extravagant should be given, but that the people in question should be given fair and reasonable terms. It is the very same question that is now before the House. If we go down to the economic details, we shall find that there was once a strike in the Godavari district. I do not want to mention the very taluk. The question was as to whether the labourers should get 2 annas or $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas a day, and ultimately they succeeded in getting 2 annas 3 pies. Then again, it is not a question of exactly how much they want. The question for us to consider is what is the fair rate of pay for these officers whom we all respect.

"The more interesting thing about this proposition is this: It has been suggested by Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar that this is only a thin end of the wedge. It has been suggested that the ryotwari karnams and the ryotwari headmen should be the only men to get this increased salary. I may tell the House quite frankly that I am sure that if we decide to-day that the ryotwari karnams and ryotwari headmen only are to get this increased salary, there is no doubt that Mr. Veerayan will at once come forward on behalf of the talaiyari; I belong to the depressed classes myself (laughter) and I am sure there will be an agitation on the part of the zamindari karnams and headmen who will come forward and say that if you are going to give this enhanced salary to these people, you must give it to everybody. In that case, we have to find not only 15 or 17 lakhs but ultimately we

3-15 p.m. must find—I think I am right in saying—40 lakhs, a sum which will make the mouths of the representatives of the depressed classes water. We have got schemes of water-supply and all kinds of really urgent things on hand for the depressed classes, and we should not throw away the money reserved for these in increasing the pay of the village officers. I say this quite seriously.

"Now, Sir, as regards the question whether Rs. 15 is a reasonable pay for the village headmen, I think this was well answered by Mr. Ramaswami

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Mudaliyar. A village headman paying a kist of Rs. 4,000 has been referred to, and it was asked whether it was reasonable to pay him only Rs. 15. In the old days—I always used to think that those days were very much better days—the village karnam and the village munsif were remunerated not in money but in land, but they were not remunerated all on the same level. Unfortunately, that system was given up and a new system of paying in money came in. But the original mode of payment was the ideal way, in my view, of remunerating these village officers. Now we have not got lands to give, and we expect these village headmen and karnams to know that we are conferring on them a position of respect; that is what Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar told us. I do not know if I am in order in referring to a zamindari area, and, if not, I apologise. When I was Collector of Madura, the question of karnam's place in an out-of-the-way proprietary village went up to the Privy Council, and the remuneration of the job was, I think, very very small, about a few rupees. That showed that the position of the village headman was prized very high. It is really one which is very much coveted, and we have therefore to consider this question of position and its worth fairly and squarely. We get men for the place and for the pay, giving up better remuneration. For instance, the late Sir K. Srinivasa Ayyangar giving up his enormous income at the Bar accepted Rs. 5,000 a month as Member of the Government apparently for the position. Again, Mr. F. E. Smith gave up his £40,000 a year in order to accept £10,000 on the Bench, for the sake of the position. As Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar said, we want the village officers to realize that we respect their position. Now, as regards their pay, we do not know where the exact limit should be placed, whether it should be at Rs. 15, 20, 30 or even at 40. Rs. 15 was considered reasonable last year; Rs. 20 is considered reasonable this year; when the next election comes—perhaps it is coming in shortly (laughter)—the figure is likely to go up to 25. Is it fair to go on asking for an increase when every new Council or a new session comes in? We had the Government Salaries Committee, the Non-Official Salaries Committee, and all manner of Salaries Committees, considering this question and giving decisions. Ultimately, it was only last year that we passed Rs. 15, and if we are going to pass Rs. 20 this year, a similar proposal may be made next year for Rs. 25 or 30. As my hon. Friend, Mr. Legh, put it, if we want to do it, we can do it only by reducing the number. But we must stick up to the number which we value so much, lest the Government should lose the services of several persons who will be willing to place theirs at our disposal. I think we had a Committee of this Council which considered the question thoroughly, and when you have clearly made up your mind a year ago that Rs. 15 is—I do not say that you can get men in the open market for that pay—reasonable, I find nothing has happened in the interim to make us increase it to Rs. 20. I think it is a very great mistake to make changes so quickly while nothing in any sense has happened to justify any further increase.

“The other point raised was this. One of the hon. Members said that large reductions had been made in the number of village officers and that what had been given by one hand was taken away by the other. But I shall give some figures from a paper in my hand: the actuals in 1919-20 for all village officers—I am giving for *all* the village officers—was Rs. 70 lakhs, and in 1923-24 the estimates are Rs. 121 lakhs, which makes a difference of Rs. 51 lakhs. Very well, then, in the next budget year 1924-25, we

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put in Rs. 117 lakhs, that is four lakhs lower. Therefore what was raised by Rs. 51 lakhs was reduced by only Rs. 4 lakhs."

Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI:—"What is the reduction in the number of officers?"

Mr. G. F. PADDISON:—"That I cannot tell you, Sir, from this paper."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR:—"May I know the years for which the comparison is made?"

Mr. G. F. PADDISON:—"The years are 1919-20 and 1923-24."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"May I know what the paper is from which the hon. Member is reading?"

Mr. G. F. PADDISON:—"The figures I gave are from a note to the Government."

"Then, Sir, I would like to say one word, a very brief word, about my own little bench here. Mr. Satyamurti asked whether we of the Heaven-born Service with our swollen salaries were going to object to this money being given to these poor people. I submit that I am a bureaucrat myself, and that I have a great deal of interest in the Public Services Commission which is coming now. But I should like to say that we hate asking for anything, and we have never asked for anything up till now. But there is a feeling, a very very strong feeling that we should like to lay before the Commission. . . ."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"We are now speaking of the village officers and their pay and not of the public services."

Mr. G. F. PADDISON:—"I was referring to the speech made by the hon. Member, Mr. Satyamurti, in your absence, Sir, in which he said that it was very unfair for gentlemen in my position, or in the position of Mr. Legh, to object to the raising of the pay of village officers, and at the same time for us or for some of us to ask for an increase of our own pay."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"I did not say so, Sir. The hon. Member who spoke for the Government (Mr. Legh) said that the contentment or the satisfaction of the service was not the deciding factor in fixing the salaries. I said that this argument came with an ill grace from those members of the Heaven-born Service who for the sole reason that they are not satisfied with their salaries come forward and say that they want more pay."

Mr. E. W. LEGH:—"What I said was that if the hon. the Mover, Mr. Venkataramana Ayyangar, was prepared to stick up to his statement that the satisfaction of the officer was the first consideration there will be many members of my own Service who will be glad to have him as their witness before the Public Service Commissioners."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR:—"I shall answer to the charge in my reply."

Mr. G. F. PADDISON:—"My point is this. The whole question of the pay of village officers has been considered since the War, along with that of the other services such as the non-gazetted officers. But we of the Heaven-born Service, as Mr. Satyamurti put it, and the other so-called superior services had our pay fixed at a time when the exchange was two shillings per Rupee on the report of the Public Services Commission which sat in 1914. The

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Salaries Committee in this case was one appointed in 1919-20. That is the distinction I wish to make, and although I might agree with Mr. Satyamurti that we are anxious that the village officers should be satisfied, I do not agree with him when he says that we should not object to this increase of Rs. 20. If his ground was that we objected after getting something that would satisfy us, if we had waited till we got that and if in the following year he had got up and said so, his criticism would be fair and just. With this slight reference to my own Service, which as you said was not quite relevant, I now turn to the question of village officers' pay.

"I am now speaking as head of a department which is a spending department and where a great deal of money is wanted. All over Madras, all over the Presidency, I want houses, I want schools and everything else for the depressed classes. Once we begin to discuss a thing of that sort, I would ask the House to consider seriously whether we should not set right that thing once for all, and settle it before other changes take place. So I do strongly ask the House to consider the importance of making the best use of our money."

Rai Bahadur T. M. NARASIMHACHARLU :—"Sir, I was responsible for tabling a motion to increase the pay of village headmen and that was passed by this House and the Government no doubt gave effect to it. But if I could have in the least dreamt that the Government was going to give effect to that resolution by reducing the number of village officers and servants, I should certainly have not brought it at all. It is not a great thing for the karnam or the village officer that he is paid a little more or a little less; but the action of the Government has resulted in depriving the means of livelihood of many a poor depressed class-man. Many *talaiyaris* were sent home; many *vettis* were sent out, and many *neer-kuttis* were asked to go out. These men were actually depending upon the very poor pay they were getting. It would have been better for the hon. the Mover to have brought forward a more comprehensive resolution, a resolution which would include not only the village officers but also the poor village servants (hear, hear). As it is, the increase of the pay of the village officers will result in the increase of the pay of these servants also, if we pursue the argument to its logical conclusion. But as I told you, the responsibility for this resolution rests on the Government itself. If they did not reduce the number of village headmen, karnams and servants, I do not think this proposition would ever have been brought at all so soon after the pay has been raised.

"It has been said that an increase in the village officers' pay might have been an election pledge; I may tell this House that this question of increase of pay to village headmen and others and the consequent reduction of the number of the staff has been a great handicap to several of us in the last elections. For, people said: 'Yes, yes, you are the cause of the reduction in our number; by your resolution it was that there was such a decrease in our camp.' Therefore I submit, Sir, this question of bringing in the election pledge is altogether irrelevant.

"We should consider it purely from an economic point of view and nothing else. As the hon. Mr. Paddison pointed out, even Rs. 20 as the minimum may not be adequate to the duties performed by the village headmen and karnams who enjoy a great deal of prestige and dignity and many

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of whom said in the recent grouping of villages, that they did not care for the pay provided they were left alone in their employment. Therefore it is not the pay that counts; it is the office, the dignity and prestige attached to it that matters: and notwithstanding the great expenditure they are put to, there is a hereditary nature attached to that post and that is what they covet.

"At the same time, it cannot be gainsaid that the economic pressure and the difficulty that the village officers find in making both ends meet are so great that we are bound to see that they are paid adequately. I think, Sir, that the minimum fixed by the hon. the Mover of this resolution cannot be considered too much. No doubt a good deal of amount has to be spent, and the hon. Member, Mr. Legh, has just said that some levy or other should be found to meet the expenditure. I submit that these village officers are persons who are responsible for the collections of the Government and when they do collect I think it is but fair that they should be paid a compensation for their work and I do not see why an additional cess should be levied to meet the extra expenditure. Considering the increased work after the regrouping and the increased responsibility which is now thrown upon them I think the pay now suggested does not appear to be high. I therefore support the Resolution."

Mr. J. A. SALDANHA:—"Mr. President, Sir, this very simple proposal of the hon. the Mover has become a very complicated question. It cannot be treated as a party question as one of the hon. Members wanted to make it. It has to be seriously dealt with from various points of view, not only from the point of view of economy but also from that of the amalgamation or regrouping of some of the villages and also from yet another point of view, viz., from the point of view of the village officers.

"Well, Sir, the village in India is an ancient institution, with its old boundaries, and with its staff which were existing hereditarily from time immemorial. Now to tamper with this old institution by regrouping or amalgamating them would be a very serious matter. These men regard their position as a sacred one and honourable; there are village officers in South Kanara who would either have big pay or receive no salary if they are treated with better consideration and respect. Every officer that goes to a village expects these men to attend on him and provide supplies—and I hope they pay for it, judicial officers generally pay, only forest and revenue officers are more exacting in their requests. But, Sir, be it as it may, we must bear in mind that it would be better that these officers should be treated with more honour and more respect as befit their position rather than that their salaries should be increased after additional worries and troubles are added by the revenue officers to their old charges. This question cannot be disposed of, Sir, by a simple resolution like this. The question is really more complex than it appears and if the hon. the Mover will bring in a more comprehensive resolution, I am sure the Government and the Ministry will give it a more adequate consideration. A committee might be appointed to consider the grievances of the work, position and salary of not only these village officers but also the subordinates. Also it might be ascertained if the regrouping is a grievance and if so what can be done to remedy the grievances. I am not sure, as it is, whether I should support the resolution: and if it is possible to bring a more comprehensive resolution I shall be able to lend my support to it; but if that is not possible I must give to this

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resolution my half-hearted and provisional support. I hope that some exit will be found from this difficulty and the mover will come forward with a comprehensive resolution on this subject."

MR. S. ARPUDASWAMI UDAYAR :—" Sir, I am fully in sympathy with the object of the hon. the Mover of this resolution. This resolution aims at improving the status and position of village officials. These have an association of their own and by constitutional agitation and by holding annual conferences they try their best to increase their prestige and pay. I for one, Sir, under normal conditions—with a bumper crop, in the absence of financial stringency and of retrenchment schemes and committees working havoc in all directions—would have had no objection to a resolution of this kind. I would have had no objection to the minimum pay being raised even to Rs. 25. But, Sir, with the failure of the monsoon, which has rendered the agricultural outlook in the southern districts very gloomy indeed, necessitating remissions, with the loss to property and life caused by the recent cyclone in the northern districts, necessitating relief measures. I do not know how my hon. Friend proposes to raise the sum of money which alone will enable him to meet this extra expenditure. I remember a discussion in this House—which took place in March 1922, if I remember right—in which the hon. the Revenue Member moved a Supplementary Grant of 21 lakhs and odd which comprised three items the largest of which represented expenditure owing to the revision of the salaries of village officers. If we pass this motion, a similar demand is inevitable and we shall only be mounting up the deficit of this province. My hon. Friend, Mr. Narasimha Raju, said that the attitude of the Government seemed to be that if the hon. Members did not pledge themselves to that grant, they would be threatened with additional taxation. Well, how could the Government help it? That is the crux of the problem. It is all very well for the hon. Mr. Satyamurti to say that the Government should give effect to this recommendation and that the Members on the Treasury Benches should devise ways and means. I for one have no objection, if ways and means are found, to support the resolution. But we have to face facts, and facts are very hard. We know that certain items of the salaries of the higher grade officers cannot be touched. That is a fact; we have also other hard facts. The hon. Member representing the depressed classes complained that very many of the menial servants had to be sent home; the hon. Member, Mr. Rameswara Rao, made a similar complaint about the reamalgamation scheme. In my own district and in the Tanjore district this process is going on and I am not able to show my head before the villagers, for they come to me in large numbers and pester me with requests. We had a Bill imposing a village officers' cess thrown out by this Council. In these circumstances, unless it is made clear that there will not be any more additional taxation or any special cess, the inevitable result will follow, the mounting up on the one hand of the deficit of this province and on the other, taxation, that is, in other words increase of the burden which already falls very heavy on the ryot. In the interests of the ryots therefore I would strongly object to this motion being passed."

MR. R. W. DAVIES :—" Sir, I regret that I have been absent from the House for a portion of the debate and so have been unable to follow the whole course of the discussion. I have, however, heard the hon. the Mover of the Resolution and three or four other Members who have spoken.

3-45 p.m.

[Mr. R. W. Davies]

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My reason for intervening in this debate is that, so far as I am aware, with the exception of the last speaker who has touched upon the fringe of the Finance Department, all other Members have appeared to ignore its existence and responsibilities. The Finance Department has a continual struggle for self-preservation. It is the cinderella of the Departments, but I trust that this House at least will consent to rescue it from the neglect from which it has hitherto suffered; and I am sure that I can appeal to the many Members of this House who have been Members of the Finance Committee. There have been three such committees since the Reforms, and the committee that has recently been constituted contains a number of new Members including my hon. Friend Mr. Narasimhacharlu, who, I regret to see, has supported this Resolution for increased expenditure. The latter has introduced the question of talaiyaris into the debate and has bemoaned the fact that their numbers have been reduced. In contrast with his present attitude, I should like to recall to this House the budget speech made by Mr. Narasimhacharlu in 1921 when he said:

‘These (the talaiyaris) serve no useful purpose; they are often looking after the private work of the officers under whom they serve. Their actual work, so far as the ryotwari talaiyaris are concerned, is only in the collecting season. The rest of the year they spend away their time on their own business or on the business of those under whom they are employed.’”

Rai Bahadur T. M. NARASIMHACHARLU:—“Time has considerably changed now. (Laughter.) That was at a time when the Government had not thought of re-grouping these villages consequent on the passing of a Resolution of this House.”

Mr. R. W. DAVIES:—“The re-grouping of villages has recently been attacked in the course of the discussion, but the power to re-group villages is an inherent and statutory power of the Board of Revenue, which is carried out, and has been carried out throughout my service in this country, irrespective of any questions of increase in pay. In the present case, however, the re-grouping of villages that has been referred to in the debate has been due to the recent increases in pay of village officers. It was in order that the wishes of the Members of this House should be met and that the salaries of village officers should be increased without throwing an excessive burden on the revenues of the province that re-grouping of villages has become necessary. Even after the re-grouping that has taken place, a salary of Rs. 15 for a village headman and of Rs. 8 for a talaiyari should prove sufficient. To pay more than Rs. 8 to the talaiyaris, to my mind, a fantastic proposition.”

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“There is no proposal to pay the talaiyaris more than Rs. 8.”

Mr. R. W. DAVIES:—“I must apologise for mentioning the talaiyaris but a number of speakers have referred to them before myself.”

Rai Bahadur T. M. NARASIMHACHARLU:—“They were mentioned not for increase of pay, but because they were sent away without any pay at all.”

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“In any case, from this moment forwards every hon. Member will be so good as to confine himself to the village officer whose pay they want to fix at Rs. 20.”

Mr. R. W. DAVIES:—“There was one point made by Mr. Saldanha who, I think, is going to vote against this Resolution. . . .”

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Rao Bahadur T. A. RAMALINGA CHETTIYAR :—“ Half-heartedly against it and half-heartedly for it.”

Mr. R. W. DAVIES :—“ To the effect that the problem is a prickly problem which cannot easily be solved. I agree with him that the problem cannot be solved by a mere debate on this Resolution across the floor of the House. Questions of salaries have invariably been referred to a committee for consideration and should not be disposed of in a direct debate on a Resolution moved in this Council. Mr. Paddison has referred to the large number of committees that have sat, the conclusions of which it takes long to consider and to act upon. I therefore suggest that Mr. Saldanha was perfectly correct when he said that the moving of a Resolution such as this is not the proper method of attaining the object aimed at.

“ Turning to the speech of the hon. the Mover—he has made a comparison between the highly paid officers of Government and the lowly paid village officers and stated that he had moved his Resolution on the ground that the lowest paid officers require the greatest consideration. With regard to the degree of consideration that has been shown to Government officers of different grades, I would refer the hon. Member to the statistics which have been placed before the House and should be within the cognizance of the Mover. The increase of pay which has taken place since the war is in the case of the All-India Services 21 per cent, of the Provincial Services 41 per cent, of the Subordinate Services 45 per cent, in the case of police constables and menials 80 per cent, whereas the centage increase in the case of village officers has been 87.”

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—“ May I know the paper from which he is reading? ”

Mr. R. W. DAVIES :—“ So far as I remember, these figures were given in one of the budget speeches of the hon. the Finance Member. I hope, however, that the hon. Mover will accept them as correct, from whatever source they have been taken. With regard to the increase of pay of the village officers with whom we are now dealing, village munsifs and karnams, I do not know whether it has been brought to the notice of this Council during the debate that an addition has been made to their emoluments in the shape of jamabandi and other allowances. This represents a form of remuneration which they did not receive before.”

Rao Bahadur T. A. RAMALINGA CHETTIYAR :—“ I have been told that the travelling allowances of these members have been reduced to half an anna.”

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—“ They are paid 3 pies per mile.”

Mr. R. W. DAVIES :—“ The hon. Member is referring to attendance at courts. I am speaking of the jamabandi allowance which has been introduced in the case of these officers. So far as village headmen are concerned, the increase covers the expense of travel to and stay at headquarters during jamabandi. This is, however, a minor point. With regard to the general proposition which the hon. Mover has brought forward, that the individual who draws the lowest salary should receive the most careful and earliest consideration, this principle is not, so far as I am aware, applied in other walks of life. For instance, in the profession of law of which the hon. Mover was a distinguished member, it is not the practice that the vakil's gumastah should

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receive the larger share or the greatest consideration. In the case of the mercantile community, it is not the practice that the Komati's gumustah receives as careful financial consideration as the Komati himself. If so, how is that my hon. Friend, who has recently retired from the bar and who has, I think, been engaged in business for some time, should come forward with a proposition of this sort?

"Another point that has been put forward by the Mover, and has been emphasised by subsequent speakers, is that the cost of giving effect to this Resolution should be met from the expected diminution in the provincial contributions to the Government of India. The hon. Mover went so far as to say that he had chosen a fortunate moment for the introduction of his Resolution, in that it coincided with the arrival of the Viceroy in Madras. I should be glad to know from the hon. Mover whether this coincidence has been pre-arranged. The prospective source from which the money is to be found is, however, an illusory source, for, so far as my own individual opinion is concerned, I may say that neither now nor in the near future is there a likelihood of the remission of our contribution to the Government of India. The only ground therefore which he has put forward to support a statement that money will be forthcoming to meet the expenditure, viz., the diminution of the contribution of $3\frac{1}{2}$ crores, which we have been paying to the Government of India, is so illusory that if, as he affirms, the prospective remission forms the basis of his proposals, the Motion he has brought forward is *ipso facto* stultified.

"Another ground for opposing the Resolution is the state of the finances of the province. During the last two years, the province has had a tremendous struggle to keep down expenditure. Its endeavour to increase its revenues has met with only limited success. The extra taxation that has been levied has produced a small result, much below expectation, and it is not intended at the present moment to introduce further taxation so far as I am aware. The proposal, if carried, must therefore be met by increasing our financial commitments. That cannot be done by increasing taxation. We should have to resort to further borrowings from the Government of India and a proposal to this effect would be bound to prove abortive. I trust that all the Members of the Finance Committee will, with the exception of my hon. Friend, Mr. Narasimhacharlu, vote against this Resolution. But even he will, I hope, repent at the last moment and vote against it. The burden upon the resources of the Presidency is greater than they can bear.

"When looking through the programme of business for to-day and the succeeding days, I noticed that the greater number of the Resolutions that are being moved are being moved either with the intention of increasing expenditure or in order to eliminate prospective increases in revenue. There is only one exception among the Resolutions and that is the Resolution to be moved by the hon. Member of the Madras University. His is a Resolution intended to diminish expenditure, but whether it has been brought forward from motives of economy or . . . "

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Order, Order. The hon. Member's Motion is on the agenda. It has not yet been moved."

Mr. R. W. DAVIES:—"I beg your pardon. I am new to the procedure of the House. There is only one other point on which I should like to touch, Sir; that is if I am allowed to indulge in personalities, it is with regard to

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[Mr. R. W. Davies]

the Mover of the Resolution. We knew one another in Coimbatore and have discussed a variety of subjects together, although not the finances of the Province. Mr. Venkataramana Ayyangar is well known to be a shrewd business man. But when he comes forward to this House, he comes not with a shrewd business proposition but, throwing aside the ordinary garb of business acumen, he appears before us in the mantle of extravagance, with a halo of prodigality and wearing on his banner the legend of 'squander-mania'. I must ask the House to stand by the side of the Finance Department and to reject the proposition."

Rao Bahadur C. VENKATARAMANA REDDI :—" Sir, the effect of this Resolution, if carried, will be that there will be some reductions in the village establishment. For instance, when the Resolution was brought forward in 1921 recommending that the pay of village officers should be raised to Rs. 15, we least thought that there would be a reduction in the number of village officers and that there would be clubbing of villages and so on. We first thought the Government themselves would meet the additional cost from other resources. But after all when we came to know that there would be reduction in the village establishments, we thought that we did a foolish thing in bringing forward that Resolution. At any rate our district is quite averse to the present Resolution. The people of my district are really bent upon going back to the old state of things and giving the village officers no pay at all. The immediate effect of this Resolution, if carried, will be further grouping and clubbing of villages. If that is so, I think it is better that there would be no increase in the pay. If this Resolution is passed we must be prepared for further re-grouping. In my district of Kurnool, which is somewhat criminal, three or four villages have been grouped together. It is not possible for village officers in such circumstances to make prompt reports as to offences committed in a place. It will take some time for the village officer to reach the place, and there will be considerable delay in reporting the offence. If there are a number of villages under one village officer, villages far removed from each other, it is absolutely impossible for him to send his report immediately ; it will take about a day for the report to be sent. We were hearing here this morning about bombs, and I submit that if four or five villages are grouped together, it is absolutely impossible for the village administration to go on smoothly and efficiently. Even now, after the increase of the pay of village officers to Rs. 15, the village administration is suffering, and if the pay is increased to Rs. 20, I submit that the efficiency of the village administration would certainly suffer much more ; and so far as people in my district are concerned, I submit they are not in favour of this increase of pay, as the effect of the Resolution will be further re-grouping and clubbing of villages. With these few words, I oppose the Resolution."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" Sir, I thought it was a privilege of a lawyer who has no case for himself to abuse the other side. I never thought that a gentleman holding the status and responsible position of the Secretary of the Revenue Department, drawing a large pay, would make an irresponsible statement that I brought forward this Resolution because I had given some pledges during the election period. He could have easily ascertained that I gave notice of this Resolution several months ago. He might have easily ascertained that for the last three or four years

[Mr. C. V. Venkataramana Ayyangar] [10th December 1923]

I have been crying again and again both in this House and outside it that the salaries of all subordinate officers, village officers, non-gazetted officers and others, should be increased, and that the minimum pay should be at least Rs. 50. I have always been maintaining that the menials and peons should have their pay increased. Ignoring all these facts or being indifferent to all such things, that a gentleman of the responsible position of a Secretary to the Government should come and say that this is an election cry, is, I submit, a thing which I cannot understand."

Mr. E. W. LEIGH :—"I did not suggest that that was the intention of the hon. Member. I said the fact that this Resolution has been brought forward now may give rise to such an inference."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—"I know he was not bold enough to attack me personally, but he made such a suggestion and I leave the point there.

"Knowing that he would fail on that point, the hon. Member cried 'wolf!' I made it quite clear that so far as this Resolution is concerned, it must be decided on its merits, i.e., whether the village officers deserve an increase in their pay or not. I clearly showed that the Government were wrong in saving a few lakhs of rupees by grouping the villages. I have been putting questions after questions about this matter making a suggestion that the villages should not be clubbed together without previously consulting the hon. Members belonging to the particular district. The hon. Finance Secretary has said that it is the inherent power of the Board of Revenue to group villages and therefore we should not vote in favour of this Resolution, although on its intrinsic merits, it might be carried. I do say, Sir, that hon. Members of this House have got the power to vote for this Resolution and also to bring in a proposal later on that under no circumstances should this inherent power of the Board of Revenue to club villages be given effect to without the sanction of this House or without a committee being appointed for each particular district and their recommendations considered. Then, Sir, so far as additional taxation is concerned, I submit that it is not a new threat. Two years ago, when we wanted an increase in the pay of the village headmen, the Government said that we would have additional taxation. They actually brought forward a proposal to levy a cess, but this House refused sanction to it. Therefore, we should not be carried away by such useless threats. We should first try to increase the salary of these officers. My hon. Friend, Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar, who is generally accurate in his facts, is incorrect in saying—I hope he will correct me if I am wrong—that the pay of all village officers has increased in 1922 whereas the pay of the karnam was increased in 1921-22. The question the Salaries Committee considered was only about the village headmen."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—"I was referring only to the village headmen in the course of my speech."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—"I am glad, Sir, that the hon. Member corrects himself. I thought that he made a mistake and referred to all village officers. My Resolution refers to village officers. There was also the question of honorary offices. Many of the village headmen were prepared to accept honorary offices; but the Revenue Department is very shrewd. The Revenue Department did not accept that offer though

10th December 1923] [Mr. C. V. Venkataramana Ayyangar]

the Salaries Committee recommended it. The Revenue Department said 'they must be treated only as servants and they should be paid only a pittance of Rs. 15 a month.'

"Again the question of the talaiyaris was also brought forward. I do sympathise with them."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Order, order. I have already said that that question should not be referred to in this connexion. We must confine the debate now only to the village officers, whatever might have been the irregularities before."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR:—"I was only referring, Sir, to the fact that money to the extent of 14 lakhs of rupees had been saved and that could be paid to these village officers. Nobody need think that I am going to stop with that. I just now confine myself to the village officers because there is the Rs. 14 lakhs saved. Five lakhs have been saved under vettis, six lakhs under talaiyaris, $1\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs under karnams and $1\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs under assistant karnams; and thus there is a saving of nearly 14 lakhs. No additional taxation and no additional grouping is necessary to give effect to my resolution if the Government are good enough to return to the villages this 14 lakhs which they have saved during the last two or three years under village establishment.

"I thank the hon. Member, the Finance Secretary, for his certificate about my business capacity. I will make use of it in this connexion. If we want honest servants, they must be paid properly. The good life of a village depends upon the honesty and good character of the village officers and therefore, to have honest people and to make them content, I submit, we must increase their pay. We should not say, just as the hon. Member, the Labour Commissioner, has said, that there was an increase three years ago and so there must be a full stop now."

Mr. G. F. PADDISON:—"Three years?"

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR:—"Yes, we forget facts and come here to make speeches. What I say is that the village officers should feel satisfied with their pay and position. The speech of Mr. Narasimhachariu made on a previous occasion was referred to. What he said was that their pay should be at least Rs. 12.

"We thought that the pay was too low and we therefore increased it to Rs. 15. It does not mean that for ever the village officers should receive Rs. 15 and no more.

4-15 p.m.

"Sir, to sum up what I said, all of us are satisfied including the hon. Members sitting on the Treasury Bench that these poor servants deserve encouragement if finances are available. One way I would suggest is the cutting of our contribution to the Central Exchequer. There are also other ways of getting money. All I can say is that the increment of their pay is quite necessary and that the principle of this resolution should be accepted by the Government. It does not matter much whether this is given effect to at once or to-morrow or some time later."

Mr. E. W. LEGH:—"I wish to say only a very few words in reply. I listened with pleasure to the dialectic used in reply to my previous speech. But I do not think I deserve the vials of wrath poured out on me. All that I

[Mr. E. W. Legh]

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have done is my duty, viz., to put before the House, so far as I have known, the plain facts in dealing with this resolution and I can only just repeat them.

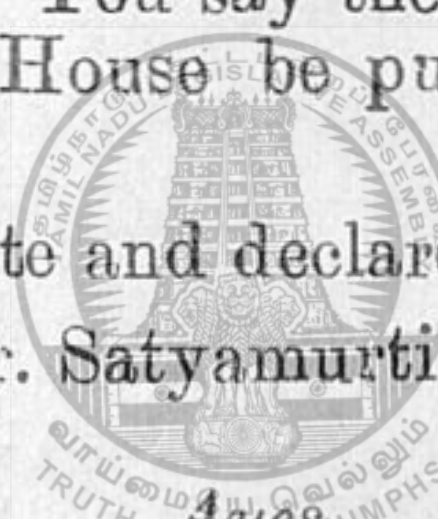
"We are asked here immediately to find 16 lakhs of rupees. We are warned that this is only a beginning. As I said before, the cost of increasing the pay of all headmen and karnams, ryotwari and zamindari, would be Rs. 40 lakhs. The increase of pay to all village officers will be double at least, it may be even treble. The total cost would be one crore and twenty lakhs of rupees (so the Finance Secretary has just mentioned). I would ask hon. Members of this House to consider as to how they are going to provide for this sum.

"Then again the Revenue Department has been blamed for the action which has been taken through the instrumentality of that department in the matter of reduction of village establishment and regrouping of villages. Well, what the House tells the Government is 'you must increase the pay of village officers, but we will not give you a penny to meet it'. I ask, Sir, the hon. Members of this House what the Government can do under those circumstances, and what course is open to them for finding funds.

"I have not made threats of any sort. It is not my habit. If you want the Government to pay increased salaries to these village officers you must give them the necessary funds. You say the House can give no money and I ask what position will the House be putting the Government in if this resolution is passed."

The resolution was put to vote and declared lost.

A poll was demanded by Mr. Satyamurti and the House then divided as follows:—



Ayes.

1. Mr. J. A. Davis.
2. „ Ari Gowder.
3. „ P. N. Marthandam Pillai.
4. „ C. Ponnuswami Nayudu.
5. „ O. M. Narayana Nambudripad.
6. „ B. Ramachandra Reddi.
7. „ P. T. Rajan.
8. „ Chavadi K. Subramania Pillai.
9. „ C. V. Venkataramana Ayyangar.
10. „ R. Srinivasa Ayyangar.
11. „ M. R. Seturatnam Ayyar.
12. „ J. A. Saldanha.

13. Rai Bahadur T. M. Narasimhacharlu.
14. Mr. P. Anjaneyalu.
15. „ A. Chidambara Nadar.
16. „ P. Siva Rao.
17. Rao Bahadur A. S. Krishna Rao.
18. Mr. S. Satyamurti.
19. „ T. Adinarayana Chettiyar.
20. „ C. Marudavanam Pillai.
21. Rao Sahib U. Rama Rao.
22. Mr. P. C. Venkatapathi Raju.
23. „ B. Venkataratnam.
24. Rao Bahadur K. Krishnaswami Nayudu.

Noes.

1. The hon. Sir Charles Todhunter, K.C.S.I.
2. „ Mr. A. R. Knapp, C.S.I., C.B.E.
3. „ the Raja of Panagal.
4. „ Rao Bahadur A. P. Patro.
5. „ Diwan Bahadur T. N. Sivagnanam Pillai.
6. Mr. H. Tireman.
7. „ G. F. Paddison, C.S.I.
8. „ P. L. Moore, C.I.E.
9. „ E. W. Legh.
10. „ R. W. Davies.
11. „ C. Nicholson.
12. „ A. J. Leech.
13. „ S. R. Y. Ankinedu Prasad Bahadur.
14. „ C. E. Wood.
15. „ A. V. Bhanoji Rao.
16. „ P. K. S. Arumuga Nadar.

17. Mr. S. Arpudaswami Udayar.
18. Sir P. Tyagaraya Chettiyar.
19. Rao Sahib S. Ellappa Chettiyar.
20. Rao Bahadur P. C. Ethirajulu Nayudu
21. „ Cruz Fernandez.
22. Mr. P. V. Gopalan.
23. „ L. C. Guruswami.
24. Diwan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nayar.
25. The Raja of Kurupam.
26. Hony. Lt. Madurai.
27. Mr. T. Mallesappa.
28. „ B. Muniswami Nayudu.
29. Rao Bahadur A. M. Murugappa Chettiyar.
30. Mr. C. Muthayya Mudaliyar.
31. „ B. Obalesappa.
32. „ K. Raghuchandra Bellala.
33. „ P. S. Rajappa.

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Noes—cont.

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| 34. Rao Bahadur P. Raman. | 47. Sir K. V. Reddi Nayudu. |
| 35. Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar. | 48. Mr. P. V. S. Sundaramurti. |
| 36. „ J. D. Samuel. | 49. Diwan Bahadur K. Suryanarayanamurti |
| 37. „ K. Sitarama Reddi. | Nayudu. |
| 38. „ R. Srinivasan. | 50. Rao Sahib T. C. Tangavelu Pillai. |
| 39. Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai. | 51. Rao Bahadur O. Tanikachala Chettiayar. |
| 40. Rao Bahadur C. V. S. Narasimha Raju. | 52. Mr. K. Venkatachala Padayachi. |
| 41. Mr. K. Koti Reddi. | 53. Rao Bahadur C. Venkataranga Reddi. |
| 42. „ J. Kuppuswami. | 54. Mr. M. Ratnaswami. |
| 43. „ S. Muthayya Mudaliyar. | 55. Mr. W. Vijayaraghava Mudaliyar. |
| 44. Dr. P. Subbarayan. | 56. Mr. Virappa Chettiayar. |
| 45. Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar. | 57. Mr. R. Virayyan. |
| 46. The Raja of Ramnad. | 58. Mr. G. Rameswara Rao. |

Neutral.

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| 1. Mr. Abbas Ali Khan. | 11. Mr. Munshi Abdul Wahab Sahib. |
| 2. „ Haji Abdulla Sahib Bahadur. | 12. Janab Muhammad Yahya Ali Sahib. |
| 3. „ G. Abdul Ghatala Sahib Bahadur. | 13. Mr. M. Sitayya. |
| 4. „ Abdul Hye Sahib Bahadur. | 14. „ V. C. Veilingiri Goundar. |
| 5. „ V. Hamid Sultan Marakkayar. | 15. „ P. Peddi Raju. |
| 6. Khan Bahadur P. Khalif-ul-lah Sahib | 16. „ K. V. Ramachari. |
| Bahadur. | 17. „ K. Prabhakaran Tampan. |
| 7. Mr. T. M. Moidoo Sahib. | 18. P. Sagaram. |
| 8. „ Muhammad Moosa Sait. | 19. Mr. K. Sarvarayudu. |
| 9. T. N. Bava Ravuttar Muhammad Sahib. | 20. „ N. Devendrudu. |
| 10. Mr. K. Uppi Sahib. | |

Ayes 24: Noes 58: Neutral 20.

The Motion was lost.

The Council then adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. the next day.



L. D. SWAMIKANNU,
Secretary to the Legislative Council

APPENDIX A.

[Vide page 201 supra.]

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE GOVERNOR OF
MADRAS.

Order made by the President of the Madras Legislative Council under Standing Order No. 15 on the 6th December 1923—

(1) Printed copies of the questions and answers to be put and given at a meeting of the Council shall be placed on the Council table an hour before the President takes his seat.

(2) The questions and answers shall be arranged in order of subjects.

(3) The Secretary shall call the name of each interpellator in the order in which the names are printed, specify the serial numbers of his questions, and make a sufficient pause to allow him or any other member a reasonable opportunity of rising in his place if he is desirous of asking a supplementary question. Supplementary questions must be put immediately after the principal questions to which they relate.

L. D. SWAMIKANNU,
Secretary to the Council.